

## What is lactose?

**Lactose**\* is a sugar found in milk and milk products. The small **intestine** produces **lactase**, an **enzyme** that breaks down lactose. The small intestine is an organ that breaks down the food you eat. Enzymes are proteins that help to cause chemical changes in the body.

## What is lactose intolerance?

Lactose **intolerance** means you have symptoms such as bloating, diarrhea, and gas after you have milk or milk products.

If your small intestine does not produce much lactase, you cannot break down much lactose. Lactose that does not break down goes to your colon. The colon is an organ that absorbs water from stool and changes it from a liquid to a solid form. In your colon, bacteria that normally live in the colon break down the lactose and create fluid and gas, causing you to have symptoms.

\*See the Pronunciation Guide for tips on how to say the words in **bold** type.